

# AKIRA

1

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

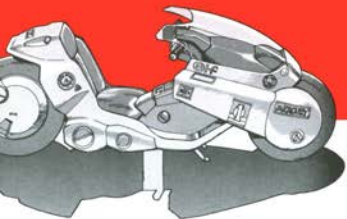


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# AKIRA

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

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**BOOK  
ONE**

  
DARK HORSE COMICS®

*translation and english-language adaptation*

**YOKO UMEZAWA, LINDA M. YORK,  
and JO DUFFY**

*graphics adaptation and sound effects lettering*

**DAVID SCHMIT for DIGIBOX  
and ÉDITIONS GLÉNAT**

*digital lettering and additional graphics adaptation*

**DIGITAL CHAMELEON  
and DARK HORSE COMICS**

*publisher*

**MIKE RICHARDSON**

*original series editor*

**KOICHI YURI**

*editor*

**CHRIS WARNER**

*consulting editor*

**TOREN SMITH for STUDIO PROTEUS**

*collection designer*

**LIA RIBACCHI**

*art director*

**MARK COX**



## **AKIRA BOOK ONE**

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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



**BOOK  
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DARK HORSE COMICS®

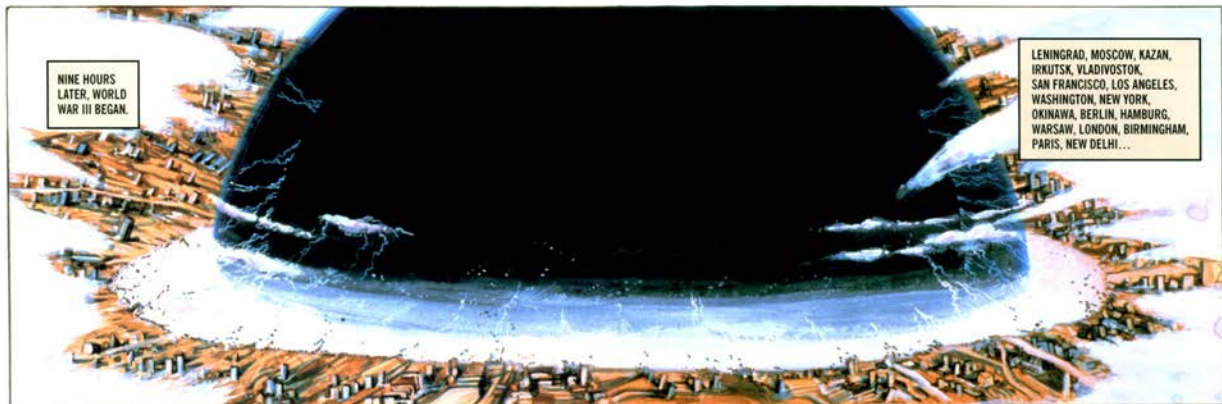
**AT 2:17 P.M. . ON DECEMBER 6TH, 1992,  
A NEW TYPE OF BOMB EXPLODED OVER  
THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF JAPAN.**



# AKIRA

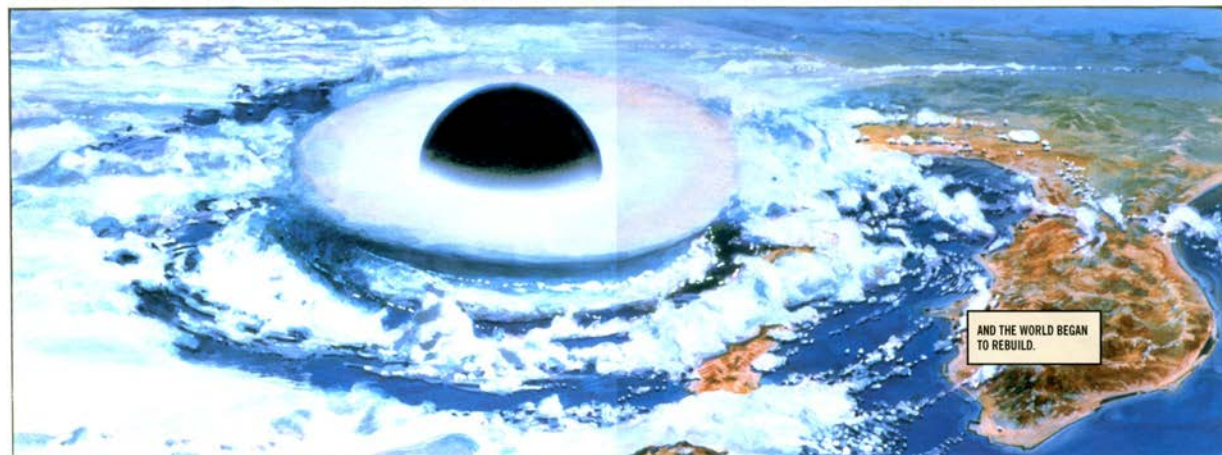
BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO





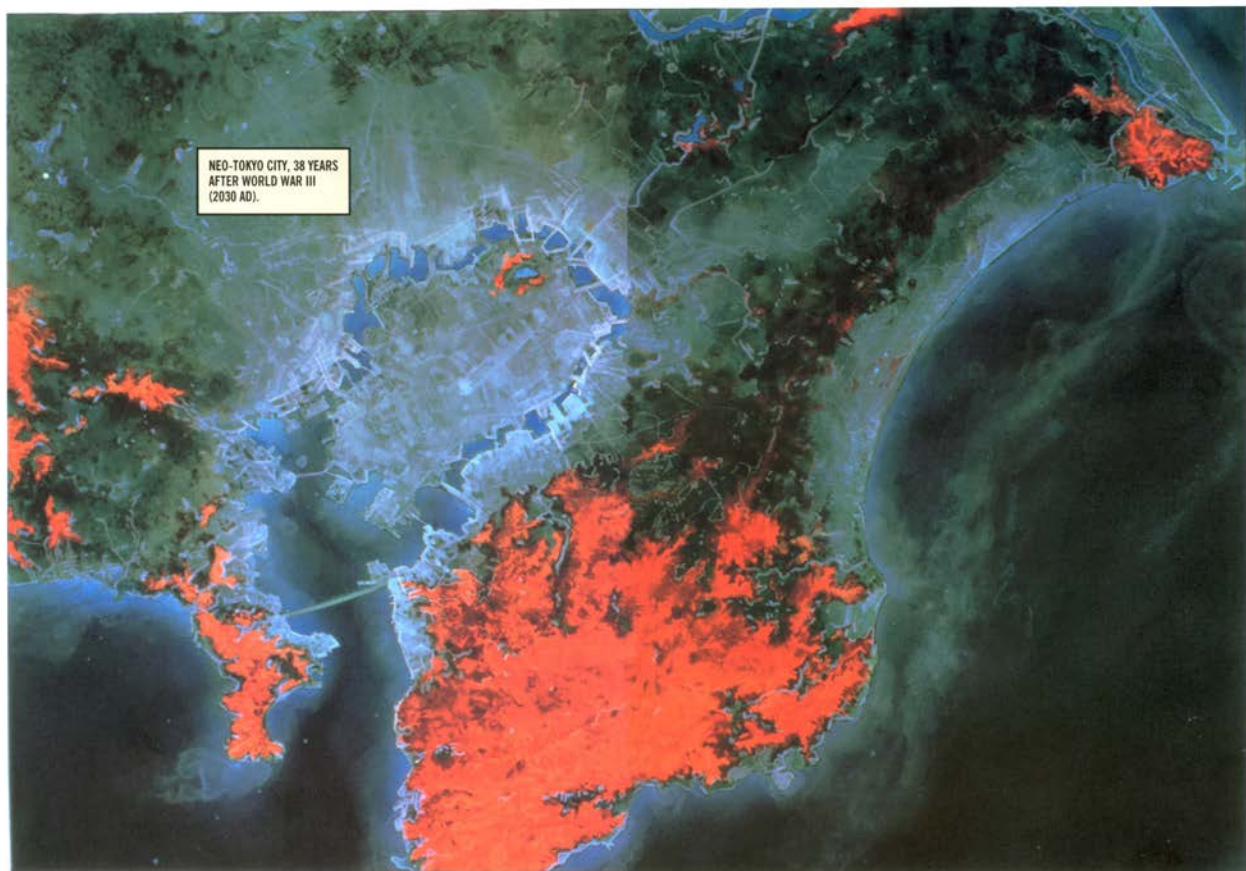
NINE HOURS  
LATER, WORLD  
WAR III BEGAN.

LENINGRAD, MOSCOW, KAZAN,  
IRKUTSK, VLADIVOSTOK,  
SAN FRANCISCO, LOS ANGELES,  
WASHINGTON, NEW YORK,  
OKINAWA, BERLIN, HAMBURG,  
WARSAW, LONDON, BIRMINGHAM,  
PARIS, NEW DELHI...



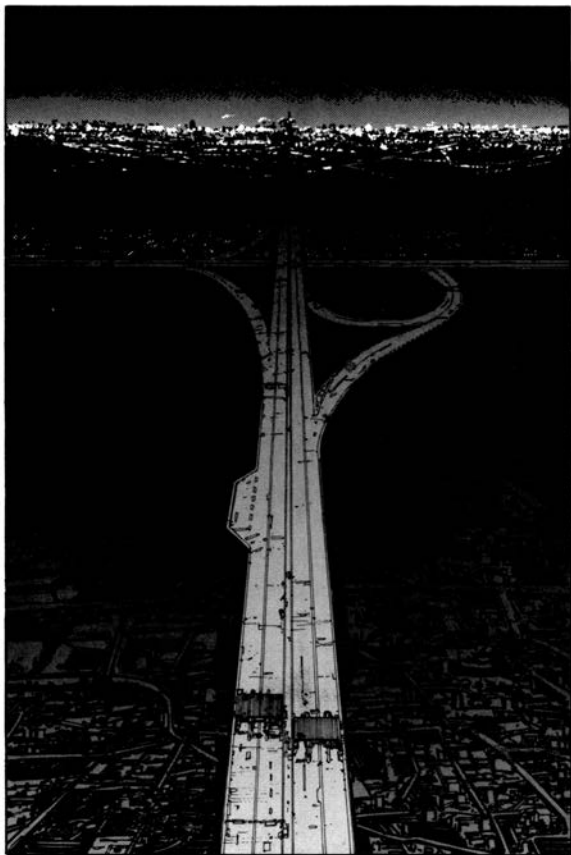
AND THE WORLD  
BEGAN  
TO REBUILD.

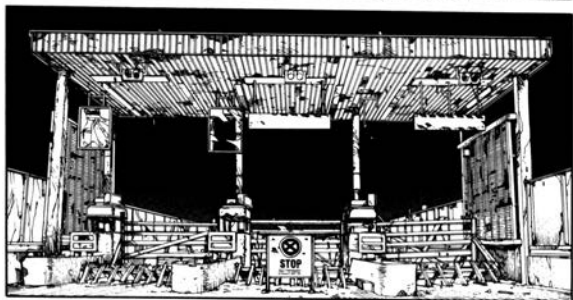
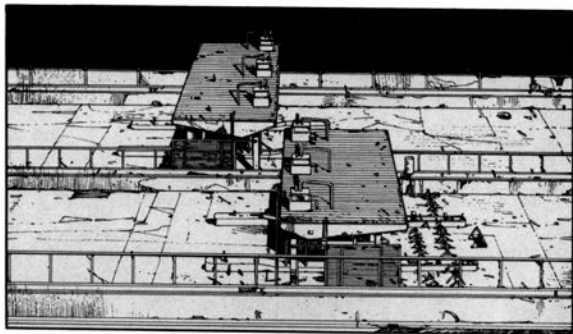




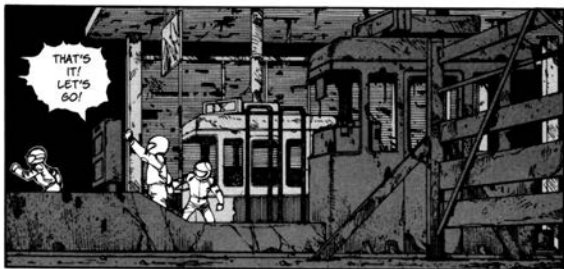
NEO-TOKYO CITY, 38 YEARS  
AFTER WORLD WAR III  
(2030 AD).

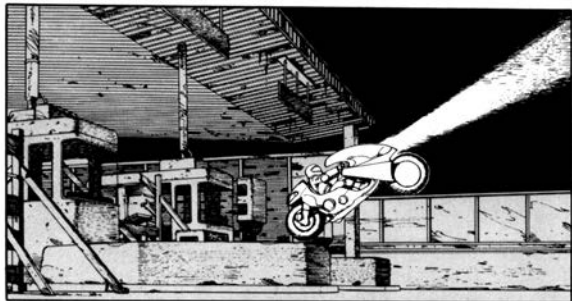


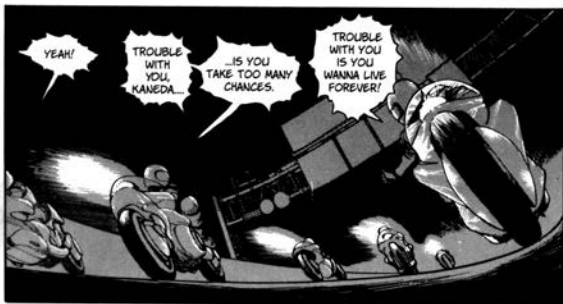
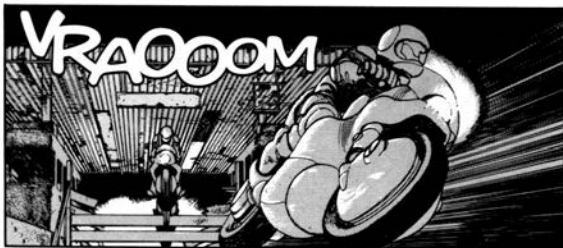


















HEY,  
WE WERE  
JUST GETTING  
INTO IT...WHY'D  
WE STOP?

'CAUSE  
WE HIT A  
DEAD END,  
DUMMY. AND  
I DO MEAN  
DEAD.

THIS IS THE  
HEART OF ALL  
THE DESTRUCTION.  
WE'RE RIGHT AT  
THE PLACE WHERE  
THE BOMB  
FELL.

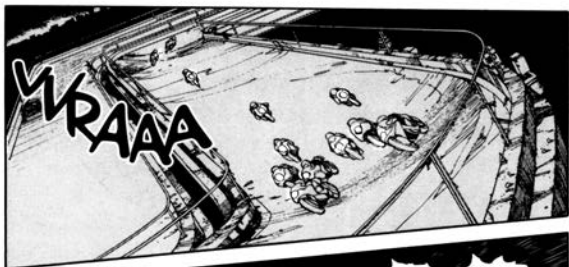
Brooo

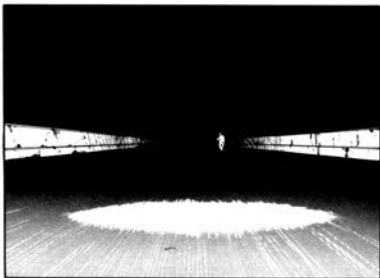
BrooBro



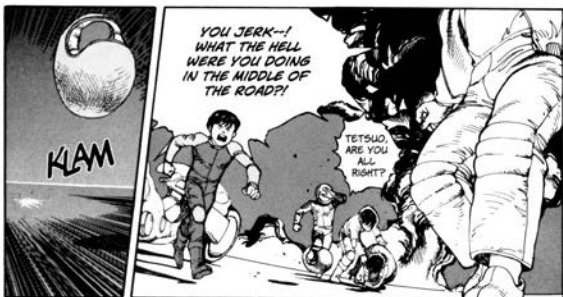






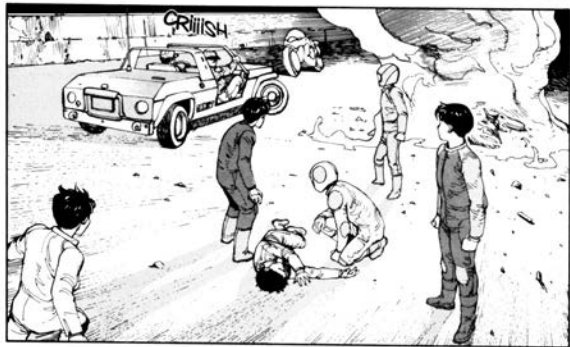






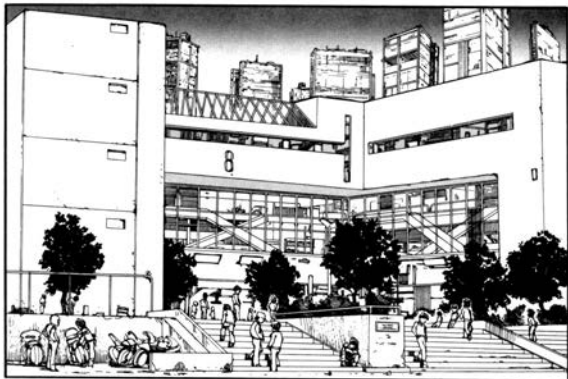






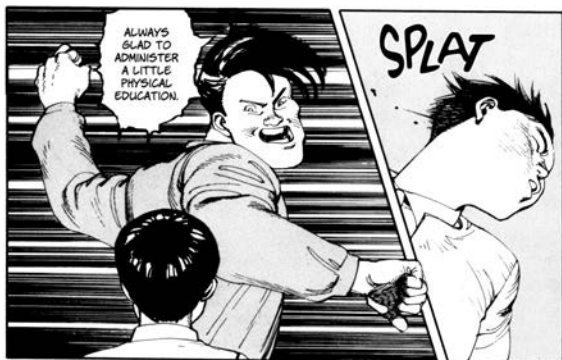
















DON'T LET THEM SCARE YOU. WE DON'T HAVE A THING TO WORRY ABOUT.



WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING THEY CAN TAKE US TO COURT FOR.



HEY! WHO LET A WOMAN IN HERE?

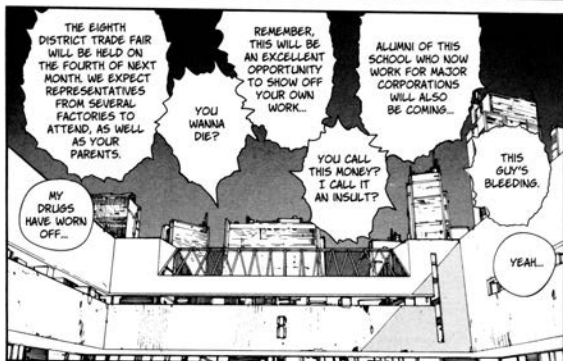
HI'LO.

SEE YOU GUYS TONIGHT AT NINE, AT HARUKIYA.

LET ME AT HER!

DON'T FORGET, WE HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT HOSPITAL TETSUO'S IN.

OKAY.



THE EIGHTH DISTRICT TRADE FAIR WILL BE HELD ON THE FOURTH OF NEXT MONTH. WE EXPECT REPRESENTATIVES FROM SEVERAL FACTORIES TO ATTEND, AS WELL AS YOUR PARENTS.

YOU WANNA DIE?

REMEMBER, THIS WILL BE AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW OFF YOUR OWN WORK...

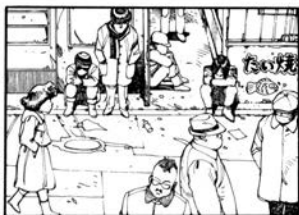
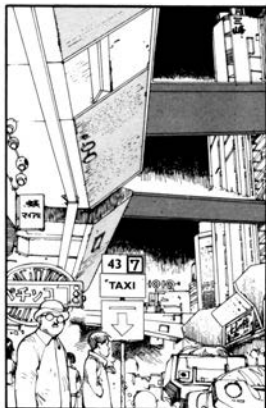
ALUMNI OF THIS SCHOOL WHO NOW WORK FOR MAJOR CORPORATIONS WILL ALSO BE COMING...

MY DRUGS HAVE WORN OFF...

YOU CALL THIS MONEY? I CALL IT AN INSULT?

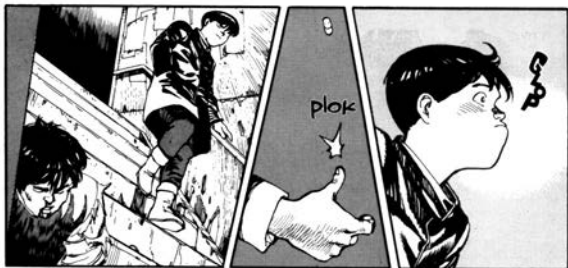
THIS GUY'S BLEEDING.

YEAH...









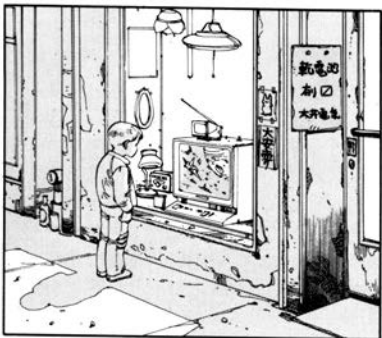
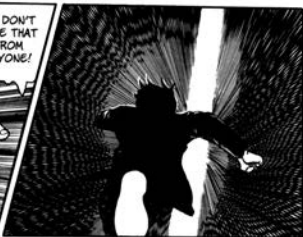


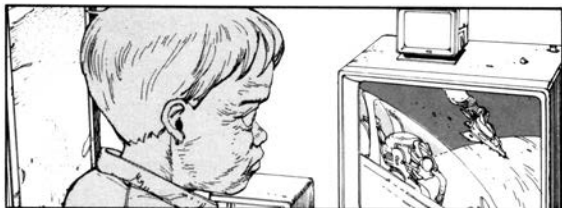














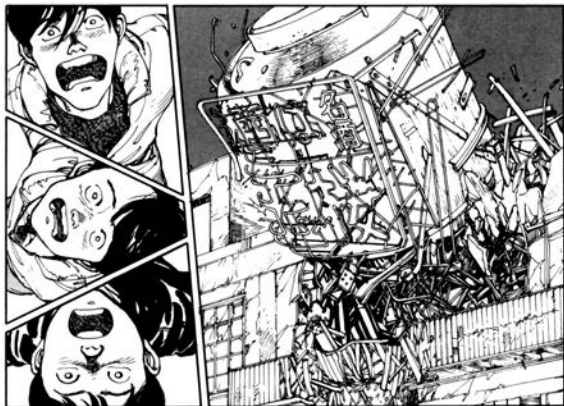




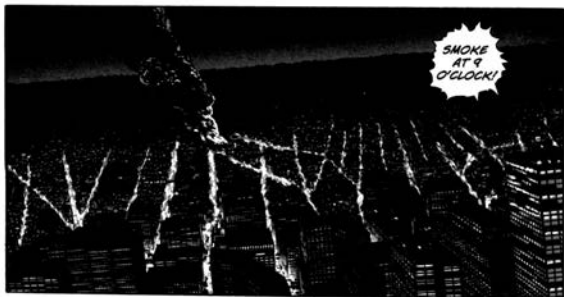










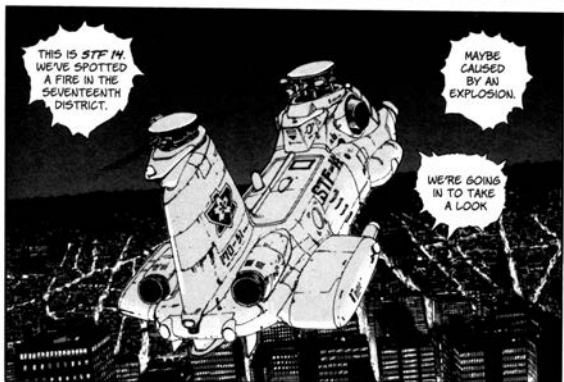


SMOKE  
AT 9  
O'CLOCK!



LOOKS LIKE  
IT'S IN THE  
SEVENTEENTH  
DISTRICT!

EMERGENCY!  
EMERGENCY!

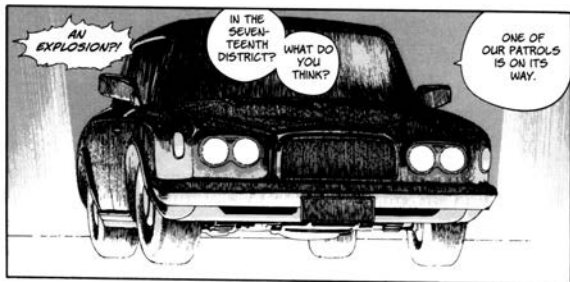


THIS IS STF 14.  
WE'VE SPOTTED  
A FIRE IN THE  
SEVENTEENTH  
DISTRICT.

MAYBE  
CAUSED  
BY AN  
EXPLOSION.

WE'RE GOING  
IN TO TAKE  
A LOOK

















SHIT!!



HEY,  
WAIT!!



PLEASE!  
WAIT!!



I  
JUST  
WANT TO  
TALK TO  
YOU!





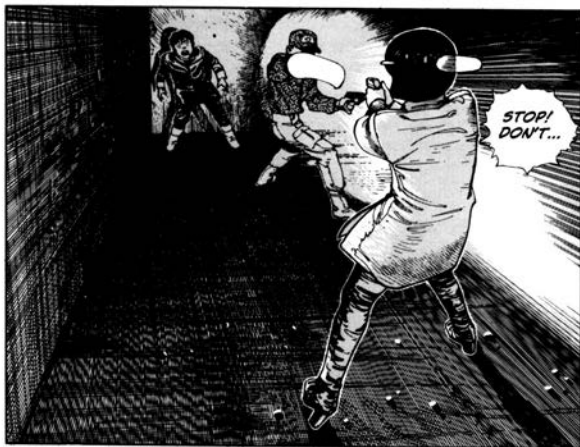
















KSHIII



WHOOA--!

TOOO



BLAM



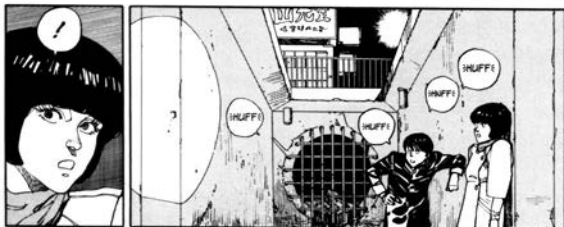
THEY'RE  
IN THE  
SHOPPING  
CENTER!

CIRCLE  
AROUND THE  
OTHER SIDE  
AND CUT  
THEM OFF!



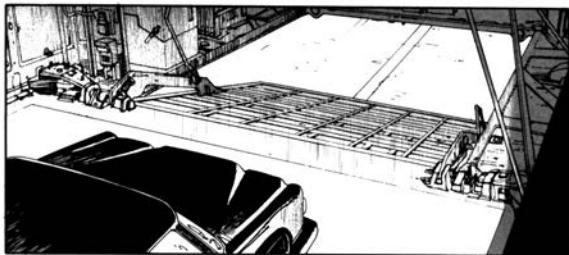
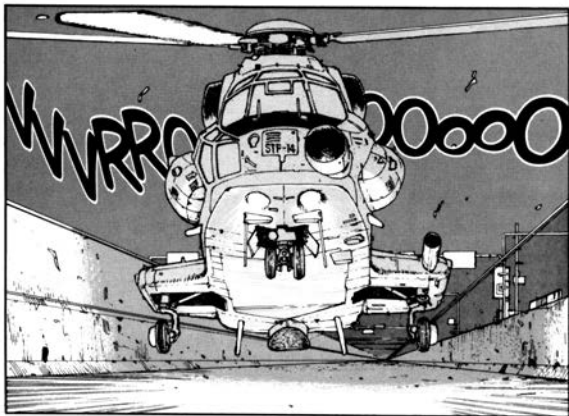


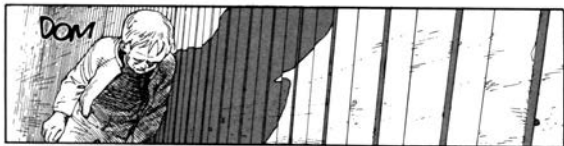
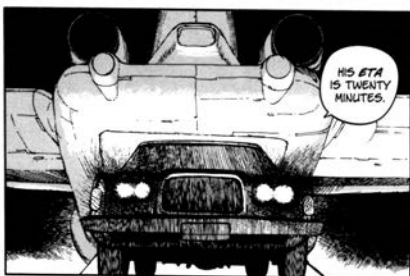


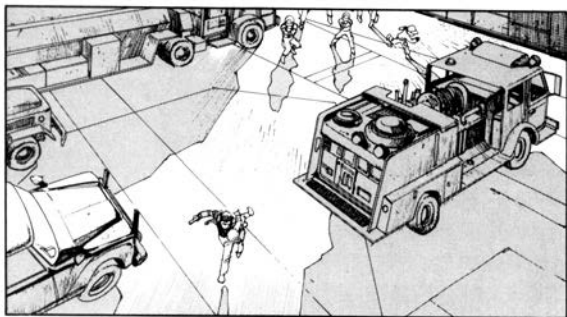
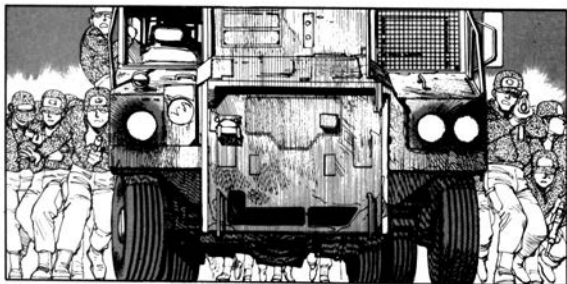




















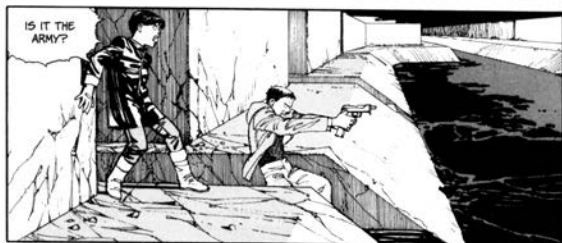




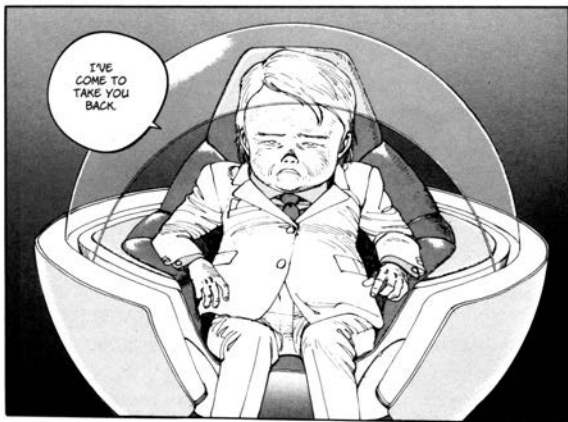




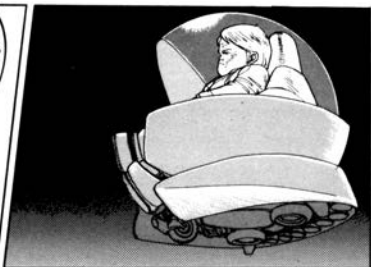
















EVEN SO, I'M IMPRESSED YOU GOT THIS FAR.







COLONEL  
--!

YOU'RE  
BEING VERY  
FOOLISH.



I  
DON'T  
WANNA  
HEAR  
IT!

FOR SOME  
REASON, THIS  
LITTLE CREEP'S  
IMPORTANT  
TO YOU!



AND THIS GUN  
I'M HOLDING  
HAS A HAIR  
TRIGGER!

YOU STILL  
REFUSE TO  
UNDERSTAND...?  
VERY WELL...



MASARU...



COLONEL...  
TAKASHI IS IN  
A VERY BAD  
WAY.



PRECISELY.

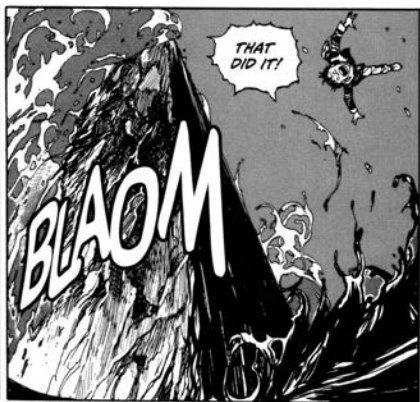
SPEED IS  
OF THE  
ESSENCE...  
AND GUNS  
ARE OF NO  
USE NOW.















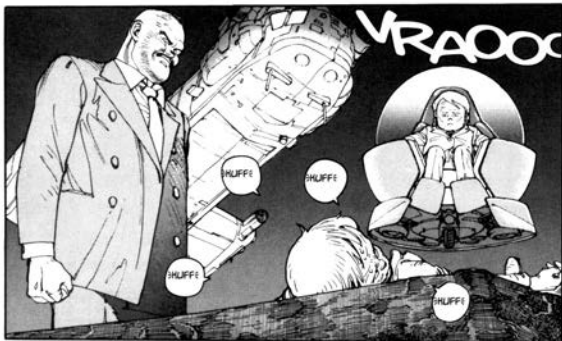








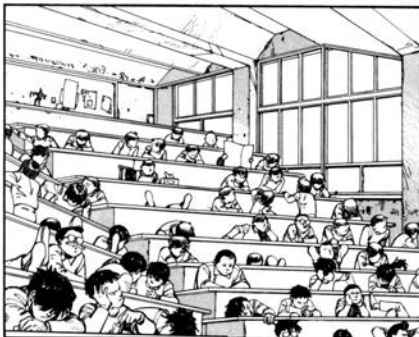












## JAPAN TIMES

### A WEEK AFTER EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT DISASTER, CANAL REPAIRS STILL DELAYED

in the Department of Sewers today that delays in the repairs after canal in the 18th District continuation of the rationing for an additional unspecified amount, the meeting will be in 17th District. Mr. Kohata, too, condemned the extension saying, "How long does it take considering what we pay in full service restored by now."



Kazuyuki Saito of the Department of Sewers also commented on rumors that the collapse of the canal was by inadequate construction. "Our staff is examining the damaged area comparing it to the approved plans not ruling out anything at this point to the construction company responsible for the work, Ohtomori General Con-







ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH GAMBLING?!



OF COURSE NOT. JUST WITH LOSING. I'M OUT TEN BUCKS THIS WEEK.

HEY, KANEDA, GIVE ME SOME!

I ALREADY TOLD YOU...



THE NEXT THING YOU'RE GOING TO BE OUT OF IS THIS SCHOOL...AND ON YOUR WAY TO REFORM SCHOOL.



IF THAT HAPPENS, YOUR TEETH ARE GONNA BE OUT OF YOUR MOUTH

I SUPPOSE IT'S MEDICINE.

YEAH COUGH MEDICINE.

KOFF KOFF



SORRYSIR IGOTTA GO!

Y'SEE, BASICALLY...

BOM



WH-WH-WH-WHAT?!



SIT DOWN, MR. KANEDA!

NEVER MIND ME, SIR. JUST GO ON WITH CLASS.



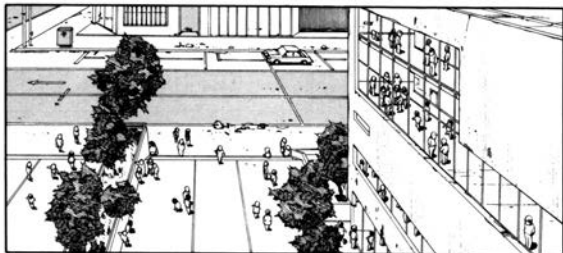














WHERE DID THAT STUFF YOU GAVE ME EARLIER COME FROM?



DID YOU FIND OUT WHAT IT IS?



PART OF IT... BUT IT CONTAINED CERTAIN ELEMENTS THAT DEFIED ANALYSIS, AT LEAST BY OUR EQUIPMENT.



SO, DON'T KEEP ME IN SUSPENSE. THE GANG IS STILL WAITING FOR THEIR STUFF, YOU KNOW.



COMPARED TO WHAT WAS IN YOUR PILL, THOSE ARE CANDY. ONE GRAIN IS FIVE TIMES AS POWERFUL AS THE ENTIRE CONTENTS OF THAT BAG.



WHAT?



IF SOMEONE TOOK THE WHOLE THING, HE'D GO MAD... OR DIE.



HMMM...



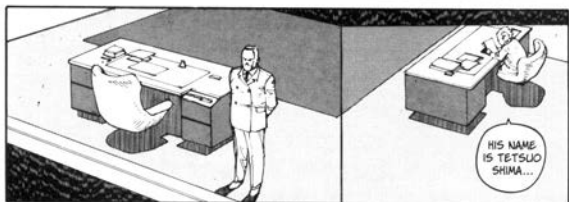
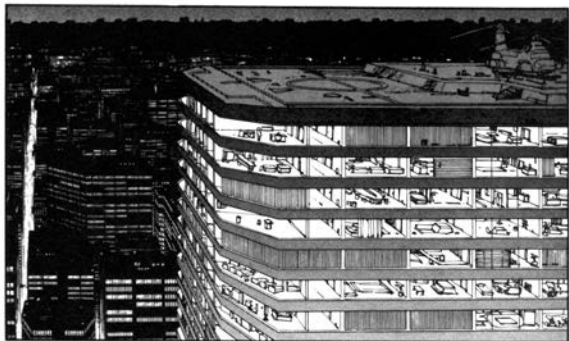
ONE MORE THING...









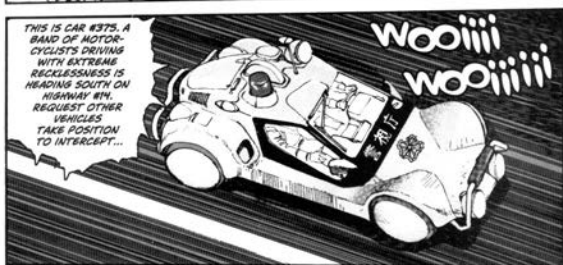
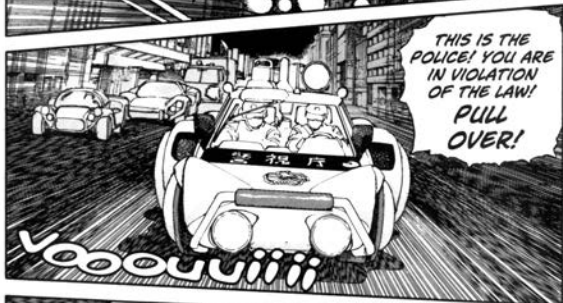










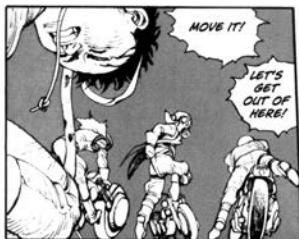








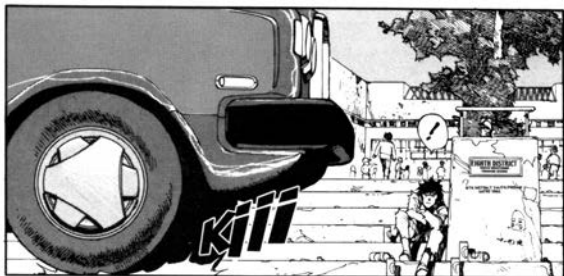






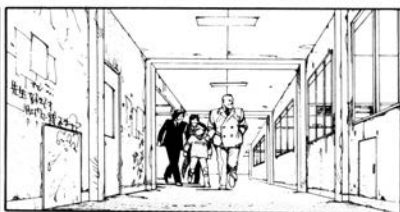






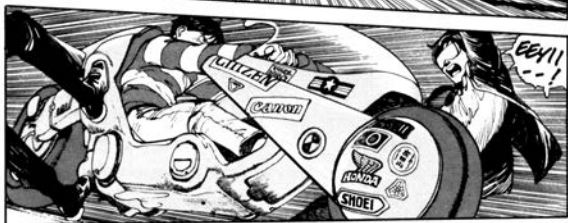




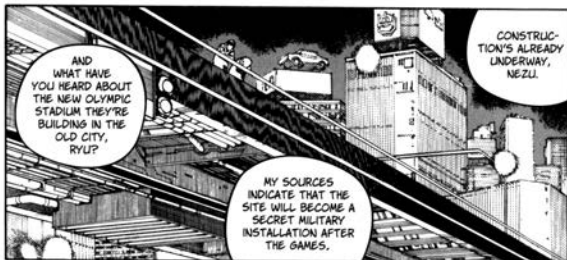














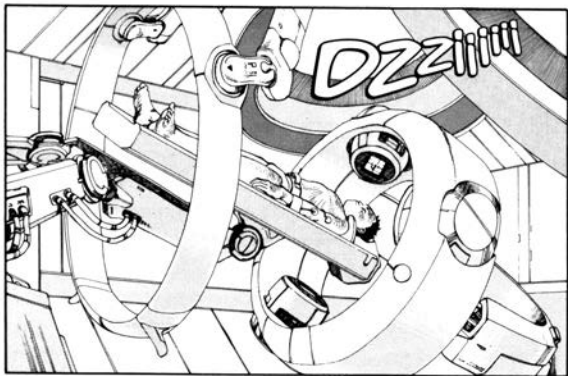


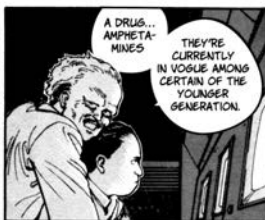


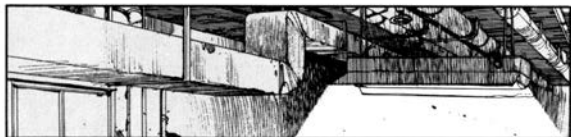
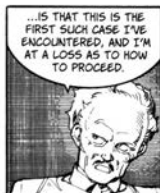














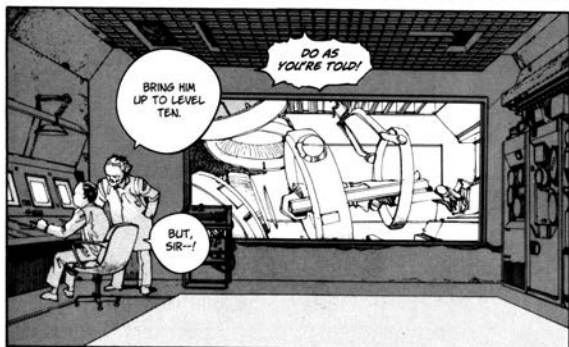
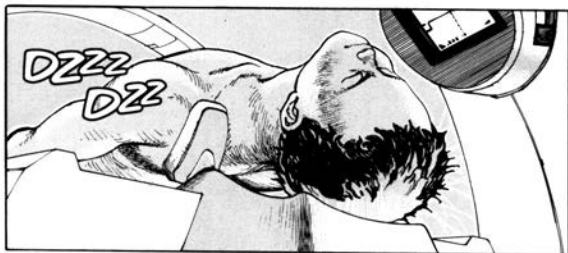
TOUGH  
AUDIENCE...



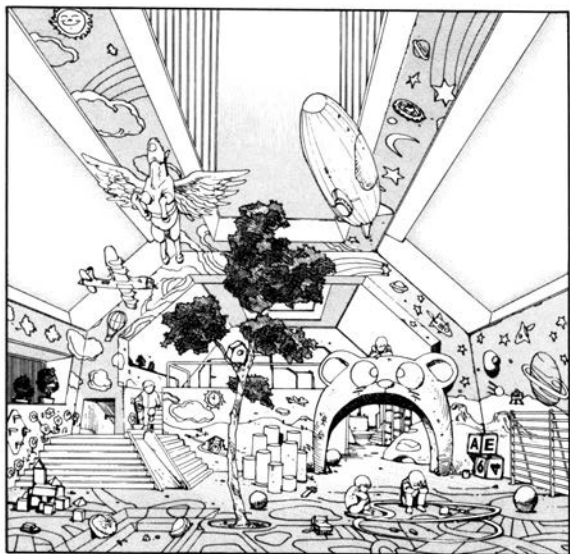






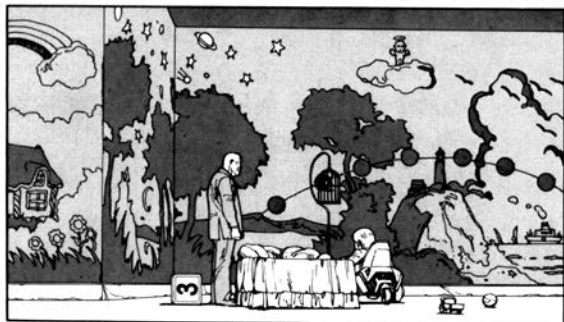














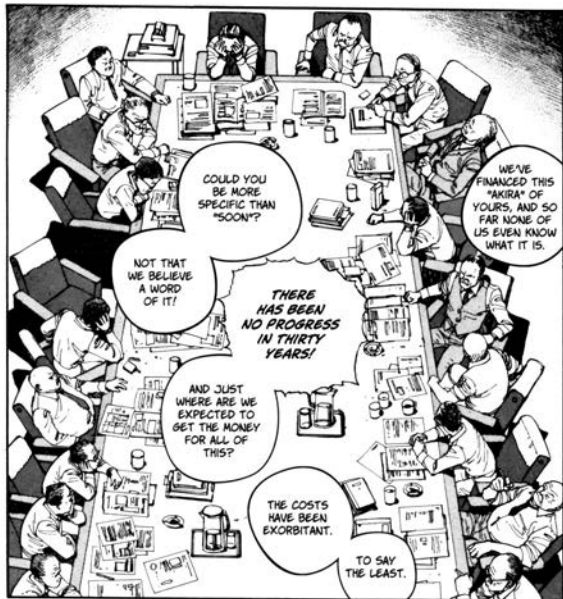








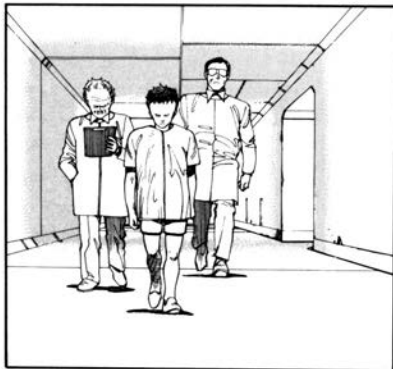










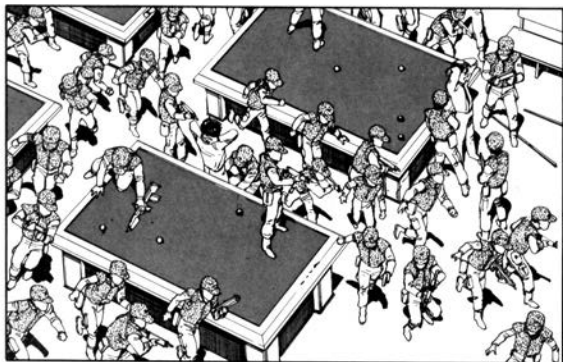








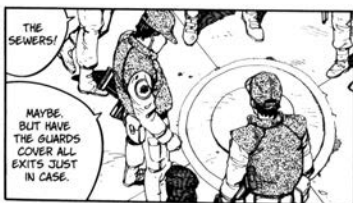


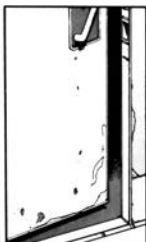
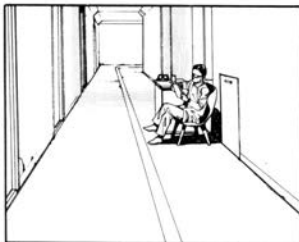
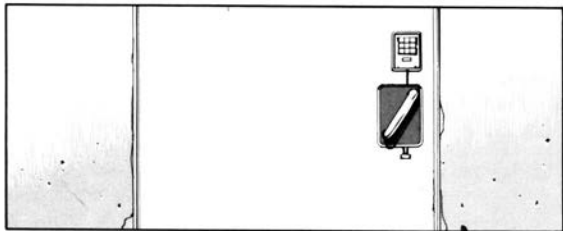






















YOUR  
OPINION?

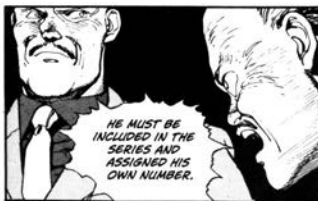


BEYOND  
ANYTHING I  
EXPECTED!

FOR HIM TO  
AWAKEN INTO  
SUCH POWER IN  
SO SHORT A  
SPAN OF  
TIME...



I BELIEVE  
NUMBER 41 IS THE  
NEXT AVAILABLE  
DESIGNATION...?



HE MUST BE  
INCLUDED IN THE  
SERIES AND  
ASSIGNED HIS  
OWN NUMBER.



























HEY!  
WE'RE  
HERE!



I  
SAID...



SHUT UP!  
IT MAKES MY  
HEAD HURT  
WHEN YOU  
TALK.



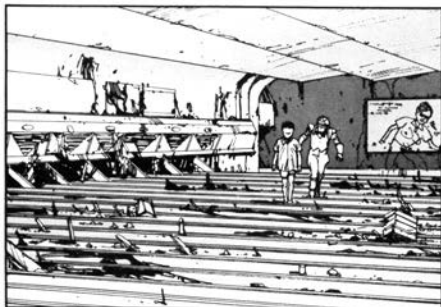
WHAT'S  
JOKER GONNA  
SAY ABOUT  
IT?

IS HE  
NUTS BRINGING  
THAT WEIRDO  
HERE?

HOW  
SHOULD  
I KNOW?

CAREFUL.  
DON'T TRIP  
IN THE  
DARK.



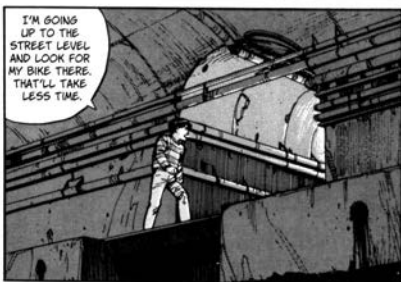
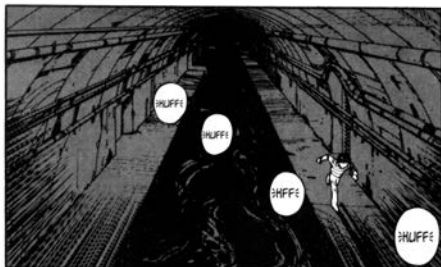


ARE YOU  
GONNA KEEP  
ME HERE ALL  
NIGHT?!



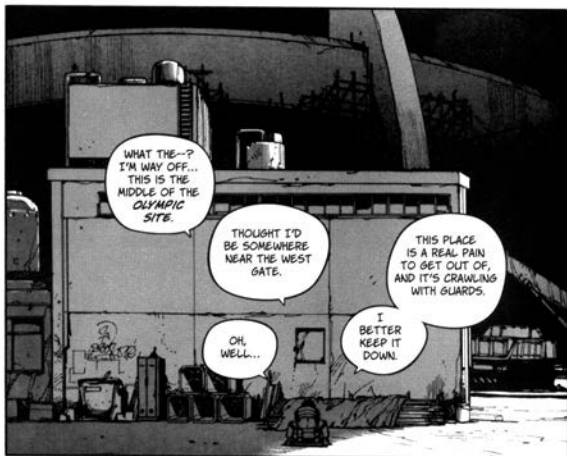


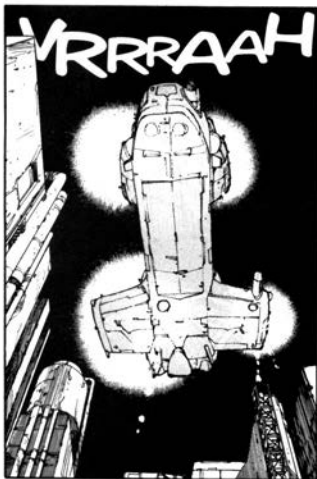




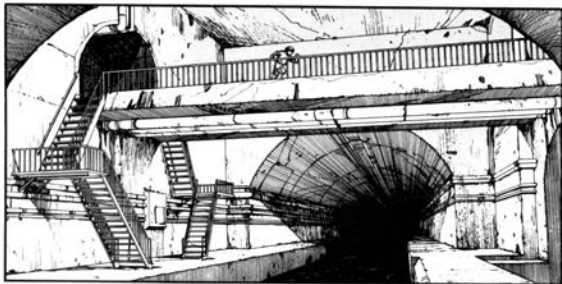


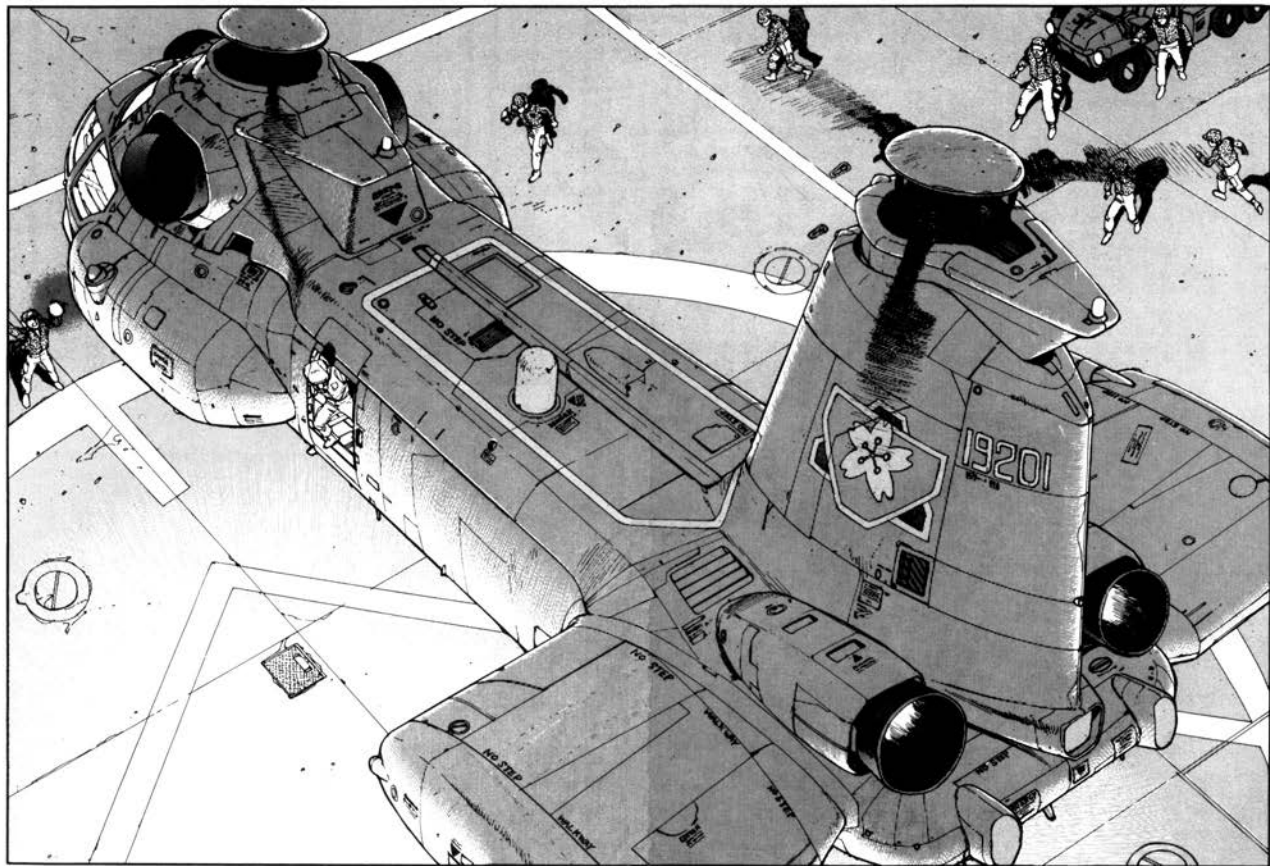


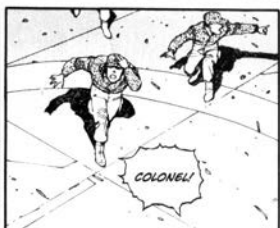
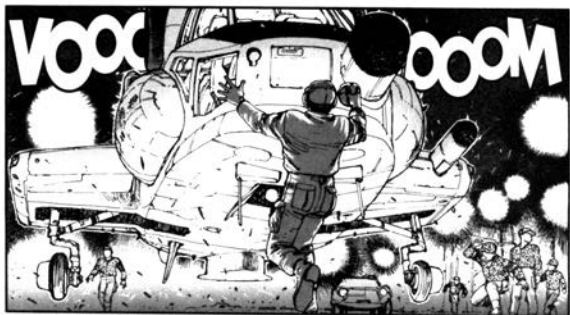










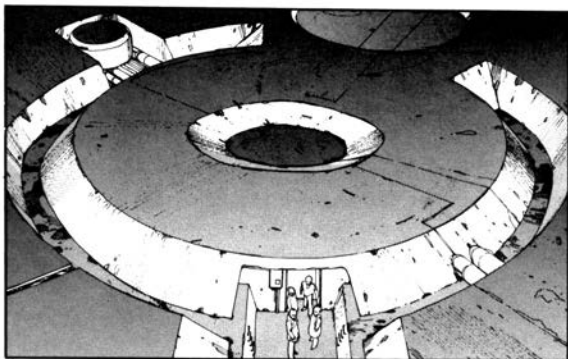


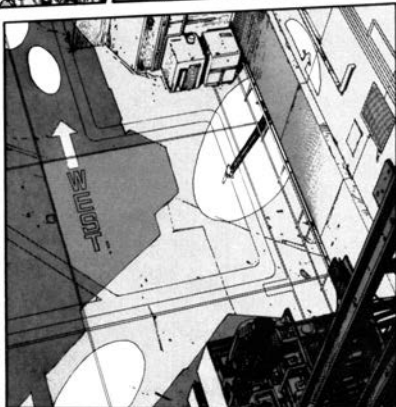




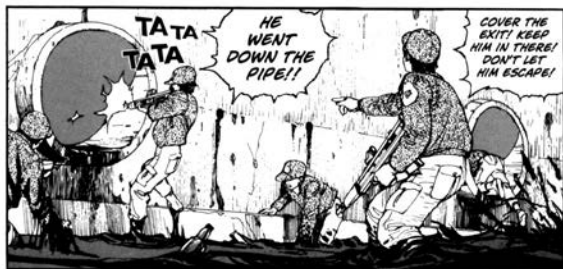


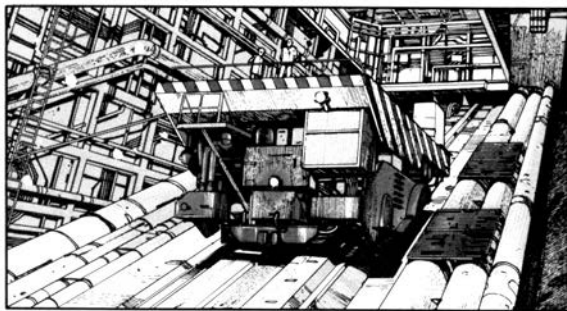
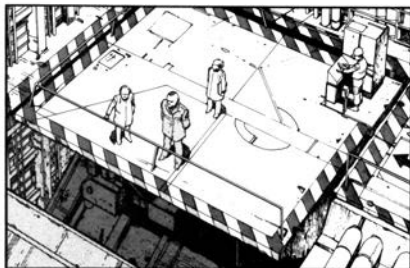


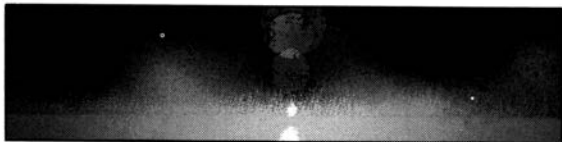


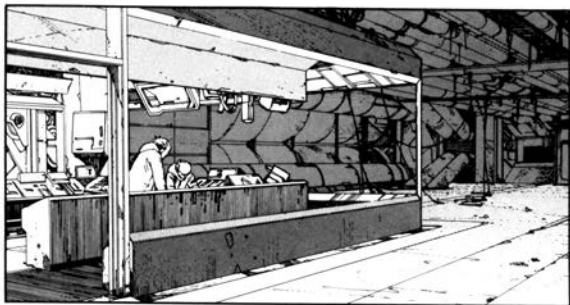








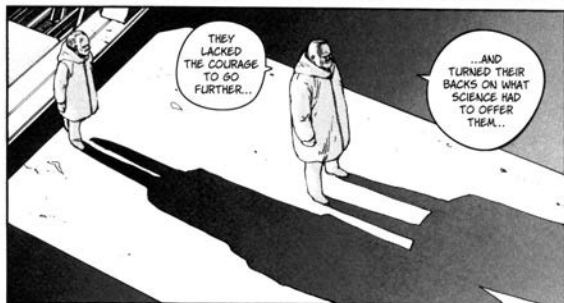
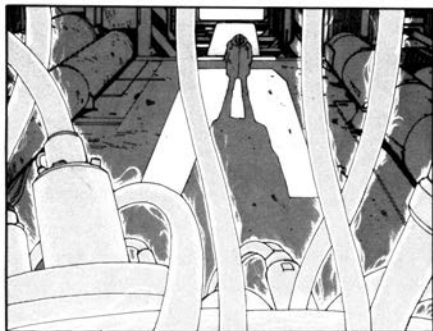


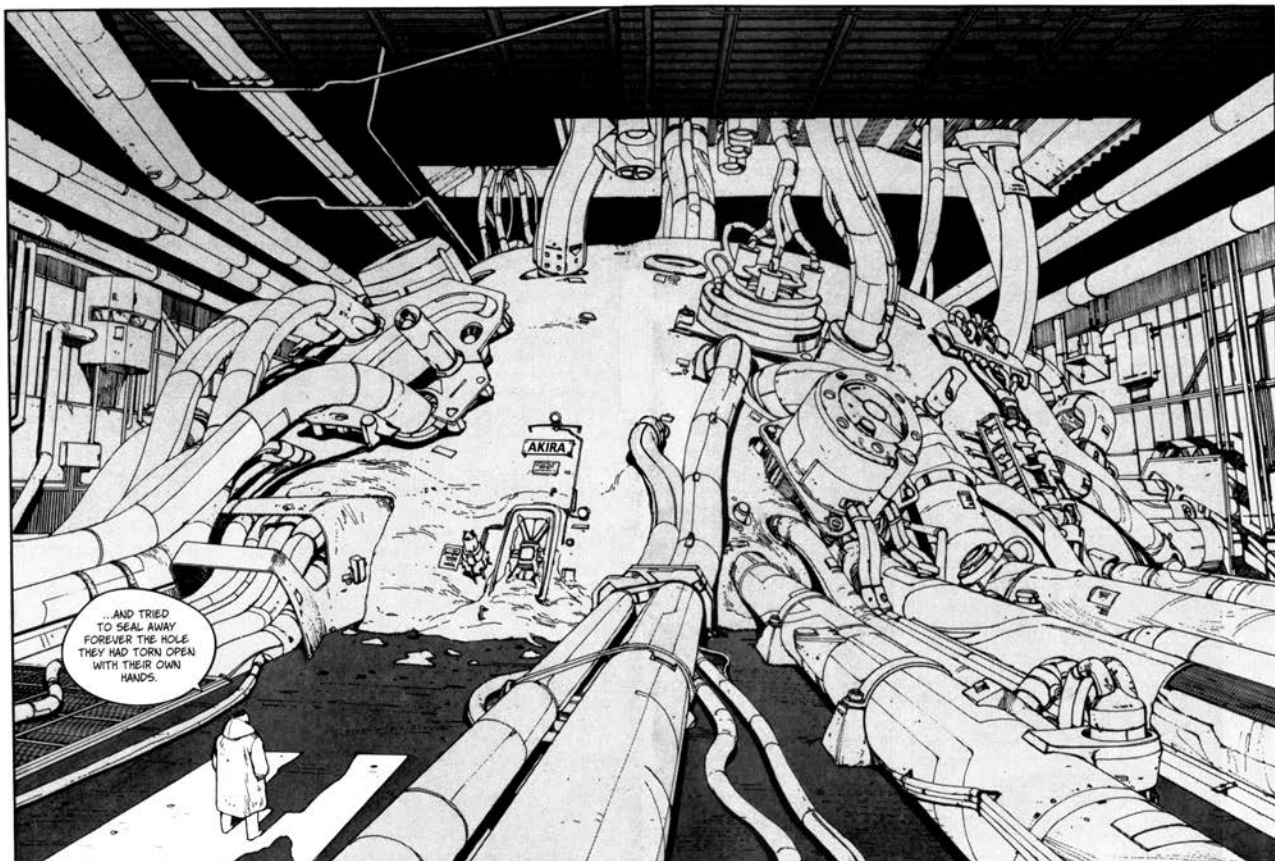


\*KELVIN: TEMPERATURE SCALE IN WHICH ABSOLUTE ZERO (-273° C) IS MEASURED AS 0°K.

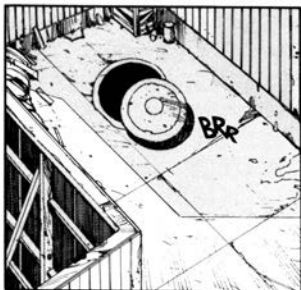
\*\*DEWAR FLASK: DOUBLE WALLS WITH INSULATED SURFACES AND A VACUUM BETWEEN, USED FOR THE CONTAINMENT OF EXTREME COLD.







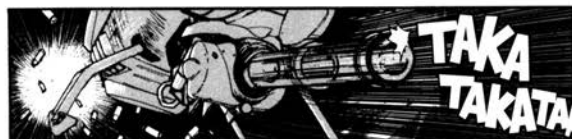
...AND TRIED  
TO SEAL AWAY  
FOREVER THE HOLE.  
THEY HAD TORN OPEN  
WITH THEIR OWN  
HANDS.











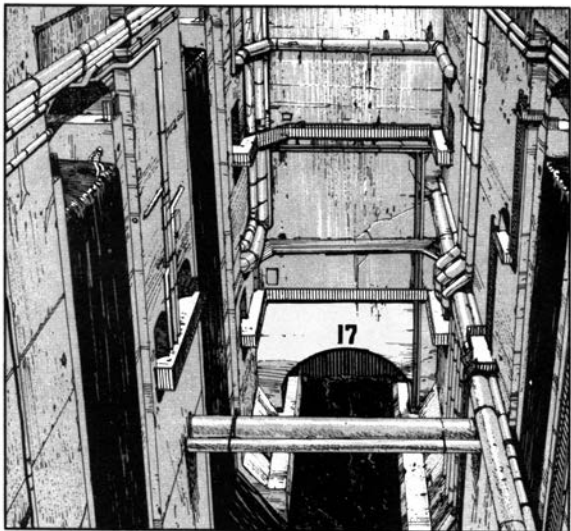


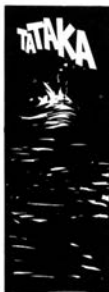












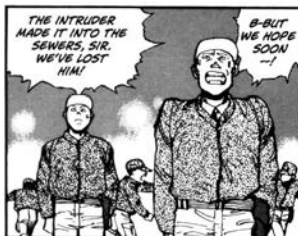


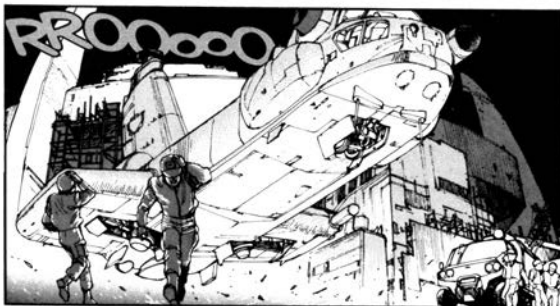
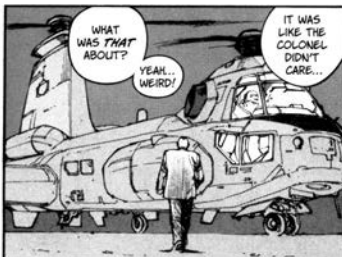




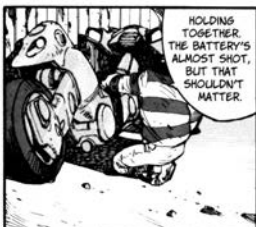


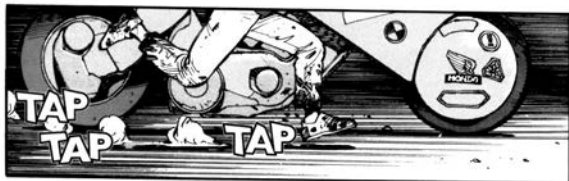










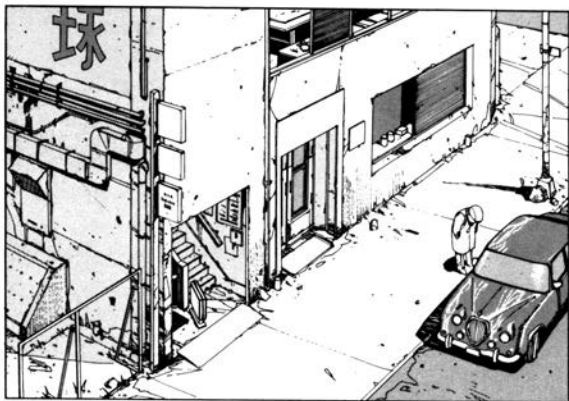










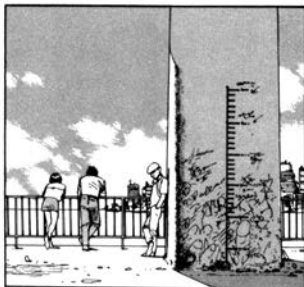












...BUCKETS  
THAT FLY,  
HUH?

THAT'S  
SORT OF  
WHAT THEY  
LOOKED  
LIKE.



I'VE HEARD  
OF THEM.  
FLYING PLAT-  
FORMS.

THE ARMY  
INTRODUCED  
THEM THIS  
YEAR



SO THAT'S SOMETHING  
ELSE THEY CAN USE  
AGAINST US.

AND IT  
LOOKED LIKE  
THEY'D DOUBLED  
THE GUARD SINCE  
THE LAST  
TIME.



WE BEAT THE  
BUSHES FOR SMALL  
GAME AND A TIGER  
COMES AFTER  
US...



YEAH...



YOU BLEW  
UP THE OLYMPIC  
SITE TO STOP THE  
ARMY USING IT AFTER  
THE GAMES, DIDN'T  
YOU?



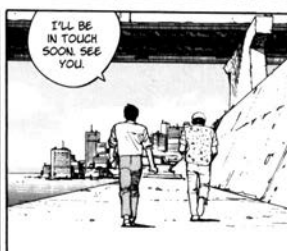
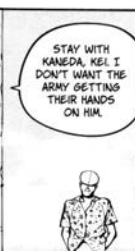
WORD IS,  
TOP BRASS  
HELD AN  
EMERGENCY  
MEETING JUST  
A FEW WEEKS  
AGO.

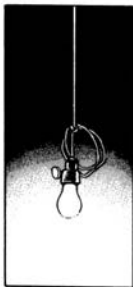


WE GOT REPORTS ON  
PART OF WHAT WENT ON  
THERE. I DON'T KNOW  
EXACTLY WHAT'S GOING  
DOWN, BUT THEY'RE  
POURING PHENOMENAL  
AMOUNTS OF MONEY  
INTO IT.















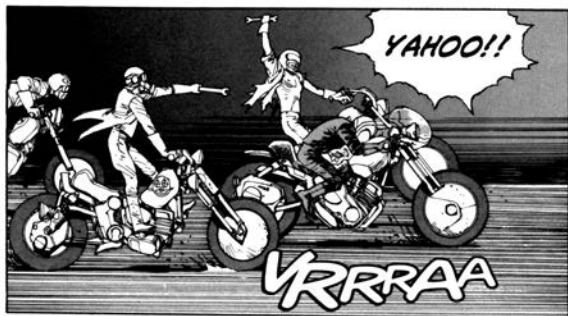






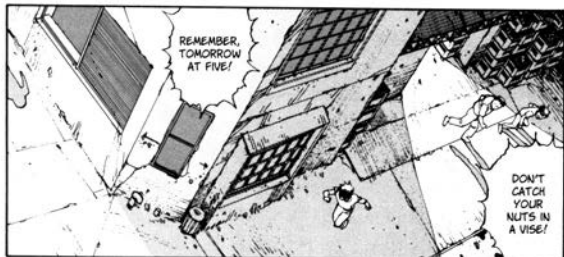




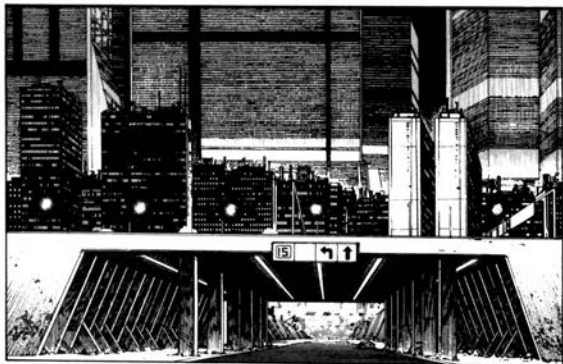






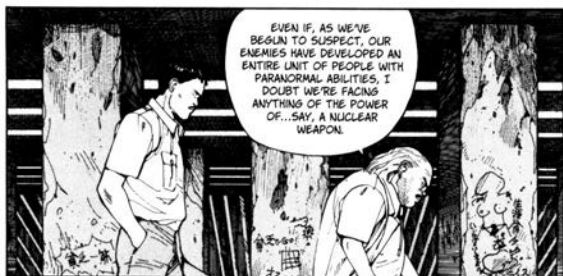




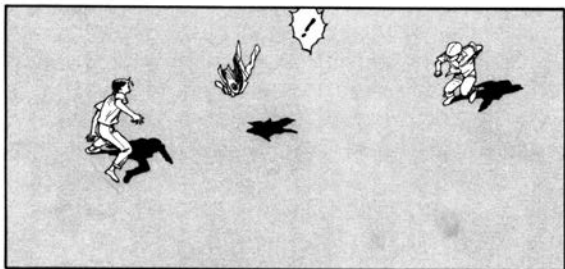


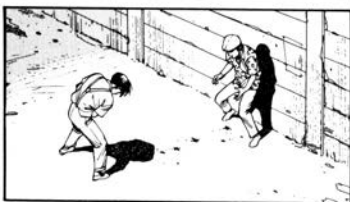




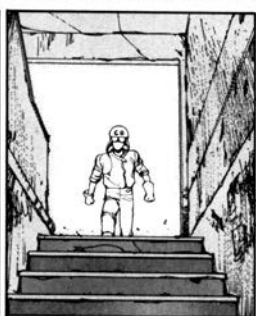








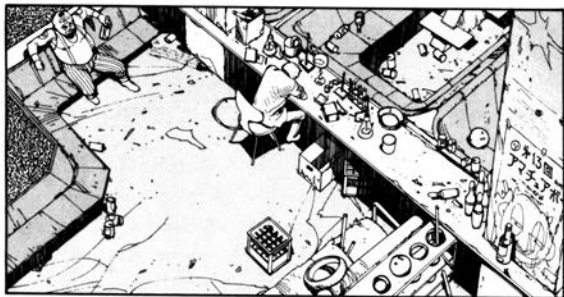


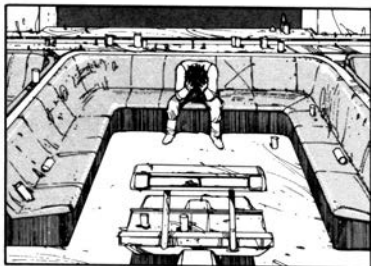














HE RIPPED A  
GUY'S HEAD  
OPEN... WITHOUT  
TOUCHING  
HIM?!



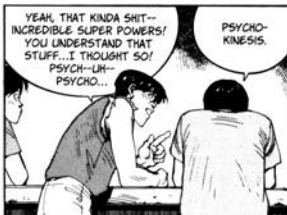
I KNEW YOU'D  
THINK I WAS  
CRAZY! THAT'S  
WHY I DIDN'T  
WANT TO TELL  
YOU!



MAKING THINGS  
MOVE AND  
EXPLODE...



YEAH, THAT KINDA SHIT--  
INCREDIBLE SUPER POWERS!  
YOU UNDERSTAND THAT  
STUFF...I THOUGHT SO!  
PSYCH--UH--  
PSYCHO...



PSYCHO-  
KINESIS.

THIS STUFF'S  
BEEN COMING  
UP A LOT  
LATELY.



HOW  
FASCINATING!



I  
WANT  
TO HEAR  
MORE.



YEAH...  
ME,  
TOO.

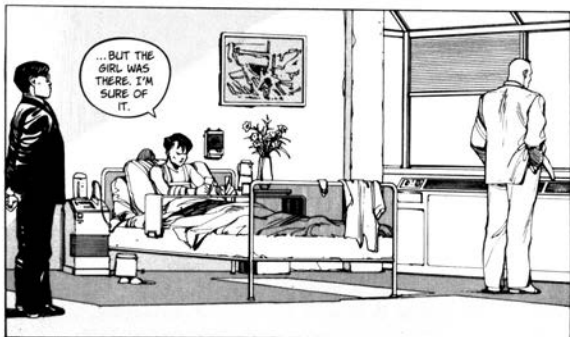








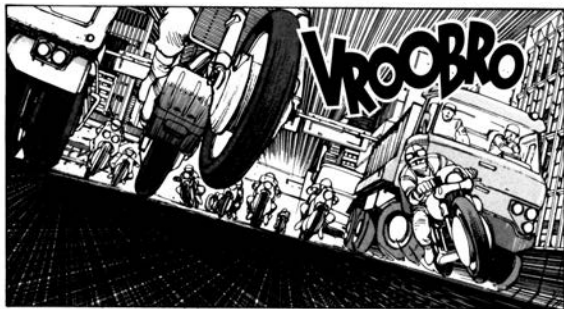


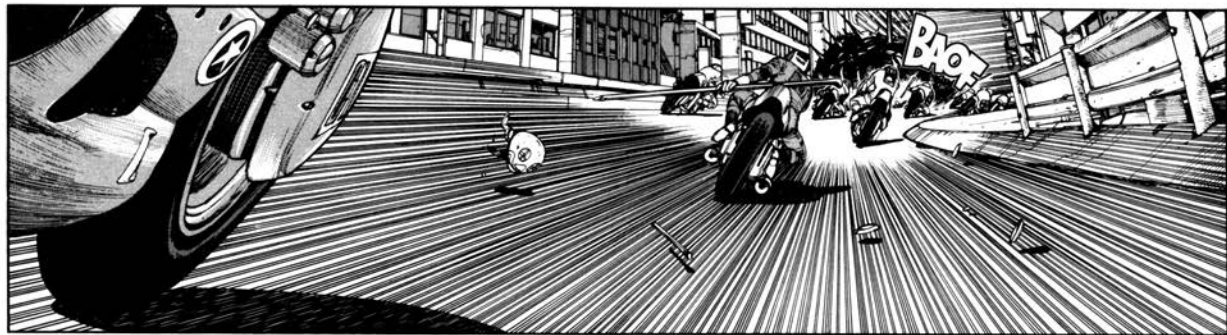




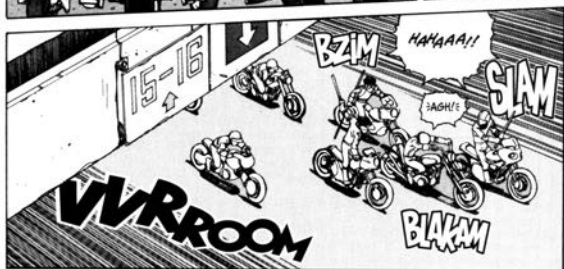


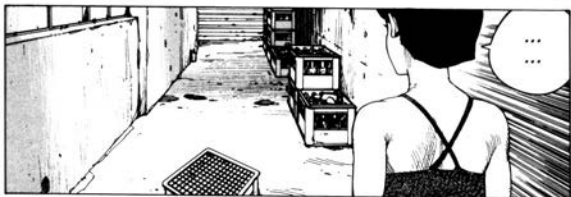


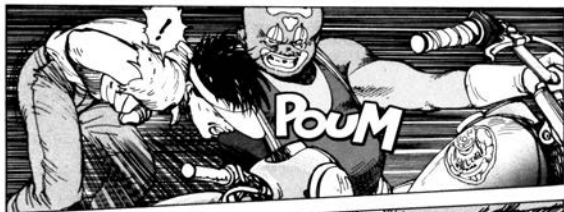






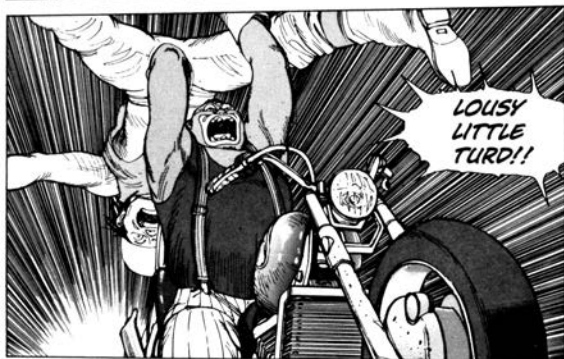
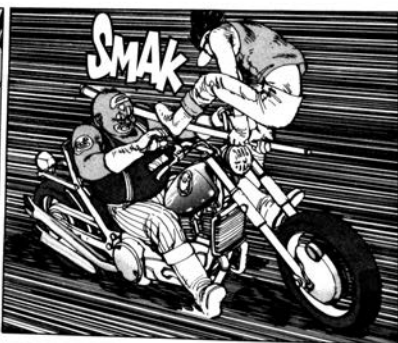


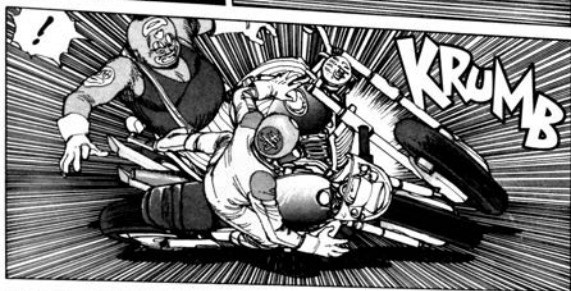






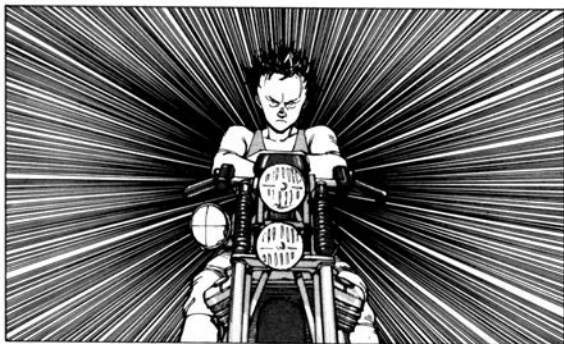
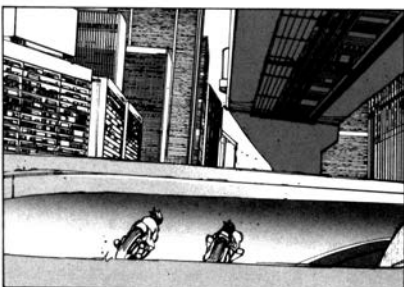


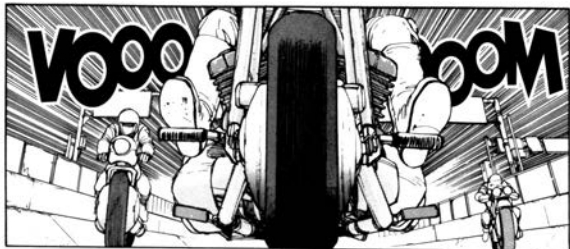






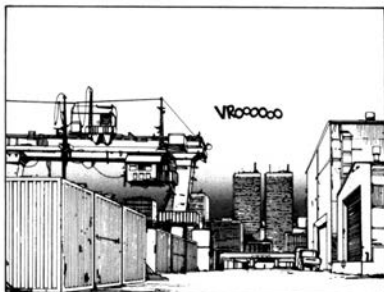
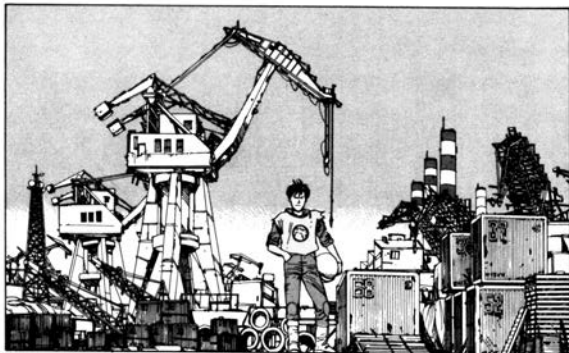


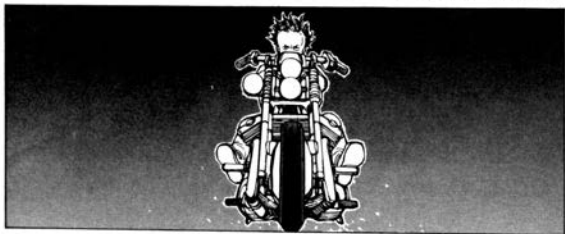




















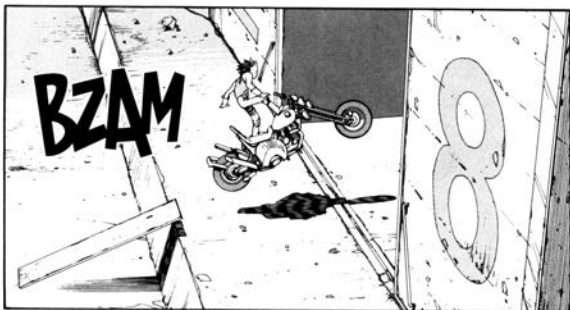












**GONG**

OKAY,  
TETSUO...  
YOUR ASS  
IS OURS!



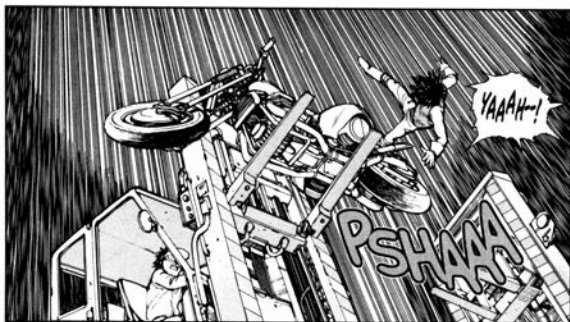
**TZING**

H-  
HEY...

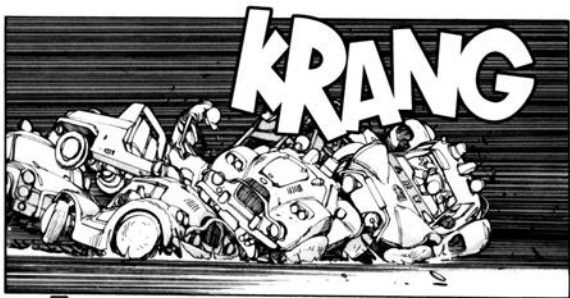
**NOW!**



**GRAABO**





















JUST LIKE  
WHEN WE  
WERE,  
KIDS!!

YOU  
ALWAYS  
HAD TO  
BE IN  
CHARGE!



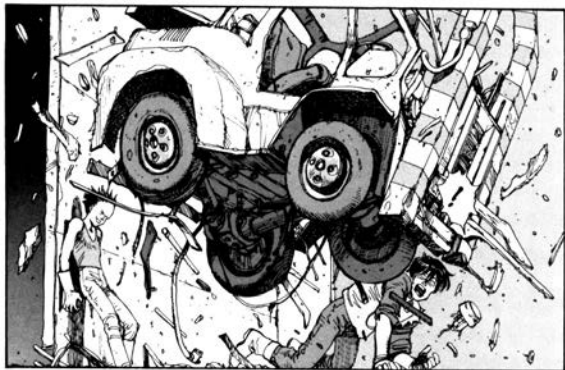
I HEAR  
YOU'RE IN  
CHARGE NOW,  
TOO--

--OF  
A BUNCH  
OF SCUM-  
BAGS.

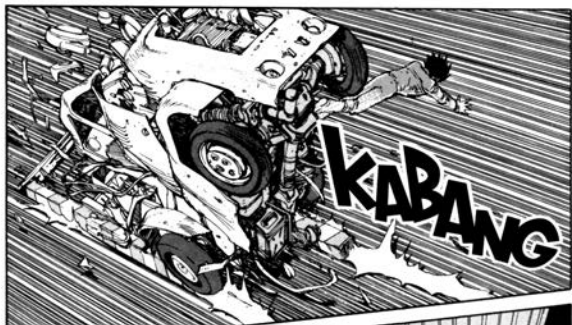








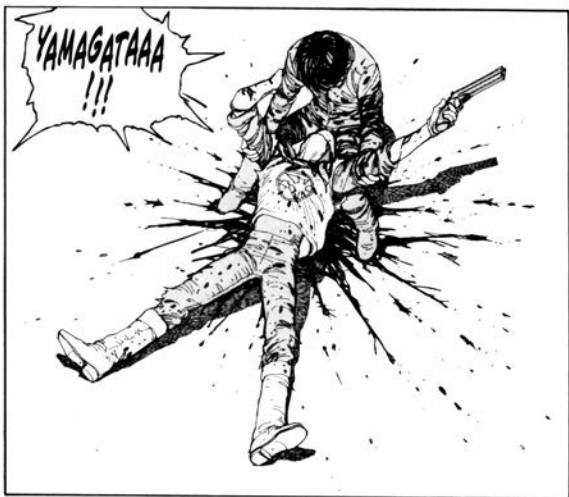




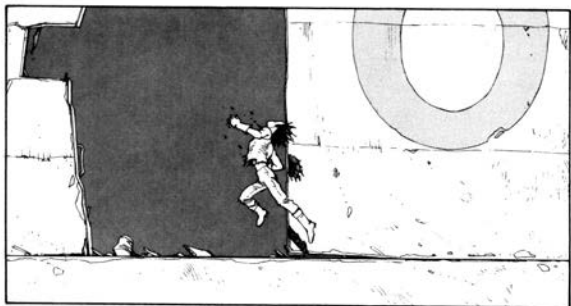






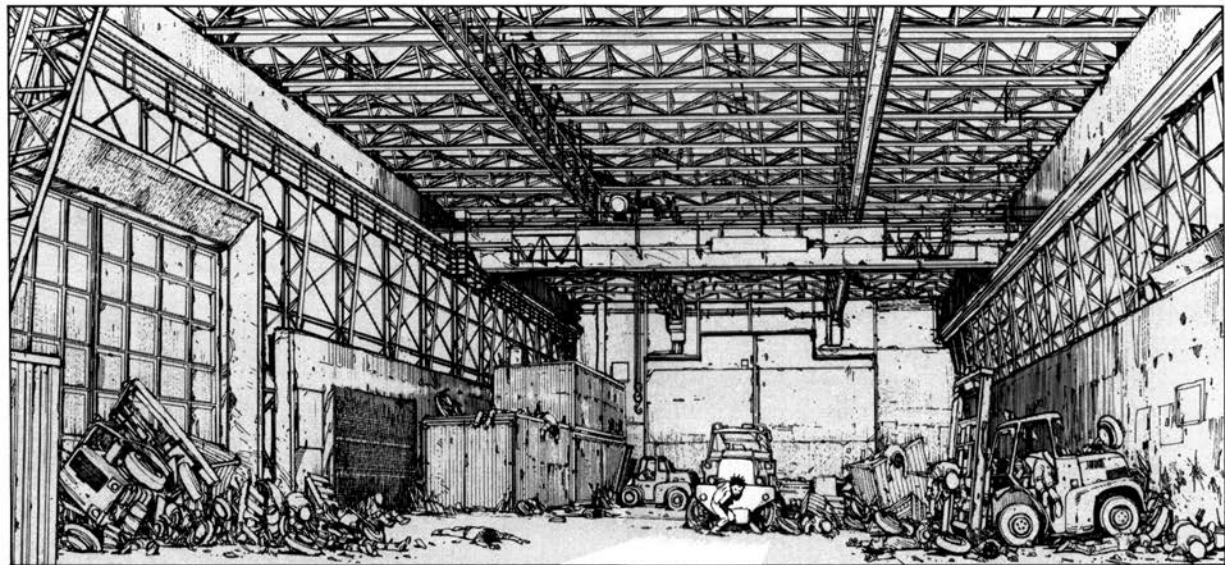


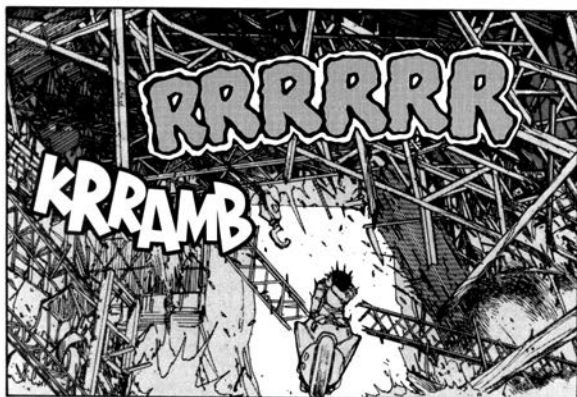












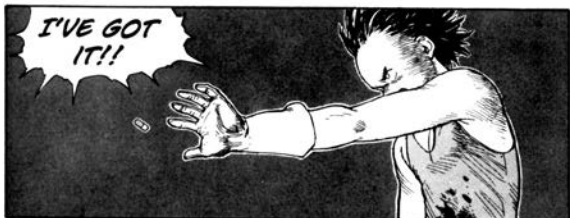




















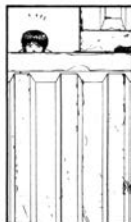


DAMN  
IT--!

WE NEED  
THE LAB  
COPTER!  
AT  
ONCE!











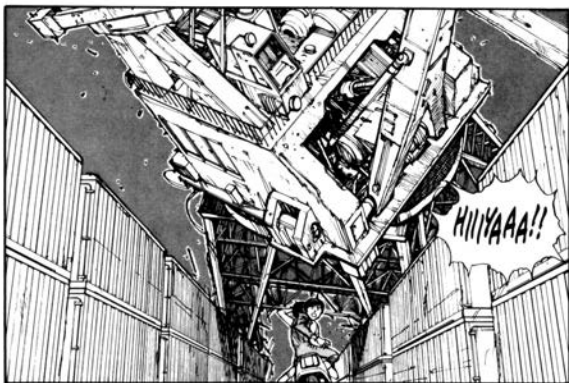




















SAY YOUR  
PIECE--YOU'RE  
A DEAD MAN  
ANYWAY!

LISTEN!  
IMAGINE WHAT IT  
WILL BE LIKE  
WITHDRAWING  
FROM THE DRUG  
YOU TOOK!



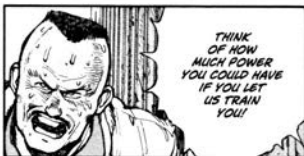
USE YOUR  
HEAD! WHERE  
DO YOU THINK  
THE DRUG  
CAME  
FROM?!



SHUFFE

THINK...  
THINK ABOUT  
IT.

SHUFFE



THINK  
OF HOW  
MUCH POWER  
YOU COULD HAVE  
IF YOU LET  
US TRAIN  
YOU!



AND  
CONSIDER  
THIS...





# KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Katsuhiro Otomo was born in 1954 in Japan's Miyagi Prefecture, a rural province some 300 miles northeast of Tokyo. While in high school, Otomo became, in his own words, "crazy about the movies." The young artist often travelled three hours by train just to see films, and the influence of cinema is a constant thread that runs through Otomo's work.

Soon after graduating high school, Otomo moved to Tokyo with the goal of becoming a comics artist. His first professional work was *Jyu-sei* (*A Gun Report*), an adaptation of the Prosper Merimée novella *Mateo Falcone*, which appeared in the weekly magazine *Action*. Otomo went on to create a series of short stories, usually twenty to thirty pages, challenging works that captured widespread critical acclaim in Japan. A 1980 review in the *Asahi* newspaper said, "Just as the New Cinema movement had demolished the old style of Hollywood filmmaking to usher in a fresh style of movie production in America, Katsuhiro Otomo... came to Tokyo to create a new comics style and shattered the conventions existing in manga."

In 1979, publication began on Otomo's first serialized work, *Fireball*, a story built around a "man versus computer" theme. Though the series was never completed, *Fireball* marked the beginning of Otomo's interest in science-fiction themes and was the forerunner of future work that would define his comics career and firmly establish him internationally as one of the acknowledged masters of the comics medium. *Domu*, first serialized in 1980 and collected in 1983, became a bestseller and was the first manga to win the coveted Science Fiction Grand Prix Award, Japan's equivalent to America's Nebula Award. The media

attention gained from this landmark achievement made Otomo one of the best-known comics authors in Japan. Critics raved about *Domu*, a story that combined terrifying paranormal genre elements with poignant observation of urban life in modern Japan. From the *Yomiuri* newspaper: "The weirdness that lurks in the seemingly peaceful living environment of a huge housing complex symbolizes the precariousness hidden at the bottom of today's living conditions in Japan."

Upon completion of *Domu*, Otomo began work on *Akira*, a two-thousand-plus-page epic of staggering illustrative virtuosity and gut-wrenching thematic power. Ten years in the making and eventually collected in six volumes, *Akira* went on to win every possible award and spawned video games, an animated feature film directed by Otomo himself — compared favorably by critics to science-fiction masterpieces such as *Blade Runner* and *A Clockwork Orange* — and a blizzard of merchandise. *Akira* has been published in virtually every language and stands not only as one of the crown jewels of manga, but is regarded by many as the finest work of graphic fiction ever created, anywhere. While the completion of *Akira* marked the beginning of Otomo's moving away from comics — his only major comics work since *Akira* has been the writing of *The Legend of Mother Sarah* — it began his odyssey as a filmmaker. After completion of the animated *Akira*, Otomo has gone on to work on a variety of animated films, including *Labyrinth Stories*, *Robot Carnival*, *Roujin Z*, *Spriggan*, and *Memories*, an anthology of adaptations of earlier Otomo comics stories. Otomo also directed the live-action *World Apartment Horror* as well as television commercials for Honda, Suntory, and Canon. Otomo lives and works in Tokyo.



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Katsuhiro Otomo's stunning science-fiction masterpiece is considered by many to be the finest work of graphic fiction ever produced, inspiring Otomo's brilliant *Akira* animated film, regarded worldwide as a timeless classic.

"Admired by Kurosawa and Moebius, Katsuhiro Otomo has for twenty-five years been the top modernist in Japanese comics. If you're lucky enough to be new to *AKIRA*, you will see how underground and mainstream alike owe him more than they ever repaid — and you'll want to get to work on the debt by buying every volume."

*PULP* magazine

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